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Echinacea-the excellent drug from eclectic school of medicine to homoeopathy: An academic cum clinical analysis

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Abstract

This ancient European herb used in eclectic medicine has three species. Those are *Echinacea angustifolia*, *Echinacea purpurea*, and *Echinacea pallida*. The *Echinacea* is popularly known as blood purifier, antidote against insect stings, scorpion and snake bite in crude form, in homoeopathy now *Echinacea angustifolia* and *Echinacea purpurea* are also used as mother tincture for the same above mentioned purpose and also used as Homoeopathic antibiotics for bacteria, fungal and viral infection. Its potency form 3 °C and 20 °C is clinically tried for suppuration infection in 100 cases inspired by some miracle success of curing gangrenous ulcer where amputation of right hand decided. Some of interesting cases are also cited for further beneficial use.

Keywords: Eclectic medicine, *Echinacea angustifolia*, *Echinacea purpurea*, homoeopathic mother tincture, homoeopathic potencies, suppuration infection

Introduction

Eclectic school was the branch of Europe and American medicine where they respect the opinion on other systems of medicine from various therapies mostly herbal therapies ^[1]. This *Echinacea* genus has three species which are *Echinacea angustifolia*, *Echinacea pallida*, and *Echinacea Purpurea*.

Table 1: Description of *Echinacea angustifolia*, *Echinacea purpurea* and *Echinacea pallida* plants

Botanical name	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	<i>Echinacea pallida</i>
Botanical Family	Asteraceae / Compositae	Asteraceae / Compositae	Asteraceae / Compositae
Kingdom	Plantae	Plantae	Plantae
Preclinical study	Well done	Well done	Done
Homoeopathic proving	Partially proved	Partially proved	Not proved
Clinical verification	Perfectly verified	Partially verified	Not verified

Echinacea angustifolia, the narrow-leaved purple coneflower is a species of flowering plant in the sunflower family.

Botanical Name: *Echinacea angustifolia*

Family: Asteraceae/Compositae

Kingdom: Plantae

Pre-Clinical studies

In several preclinical studies, *Echinacea* genus is found to be immunostimulant and immunomodulatory. Several studies show that by RCT clinical trial the *Echinacea* herbal preparation mostly alcoholic extract showed effective in upper respiratory infection ^[2]. The active pharmaceutical ingredients are glycoproteins, polysaccharides, Caffeic acid derivatives (Cichoric acid), and alkaloids ^[3]. Some of the detail study was done on *Echinacea purpurea* (which is also available in Homoeopathic mother tincture form now-a-day) by Manayi *et al*, reveals that “the complex chemical composition of the roots and herbs of *Echinacea* involves alkaloids, ketoalkenes, caffeic acid derivatives, polysaccharides, and glycoproteins, which are believed to be responsible for noted immunostimulatory and anti-inflammatory activities. Moreover, alkaloids are demonstrated to be effective on cannabinoid receptor type 2 (CB2), and this is considered as a possible mechanism of their immunomodulatory properties. Their possible molecular mechanism could be the increase of cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP), p38 mitogen-activated protein kinases (p38/MAPK)

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and c-Jun N-terminal kinases (JNK) signaling, as well as nuclear factor kappa-light-chain-enhancer of activated B cells (NF-κB), activating transcription factor 2/cAMP responsive element binding protein 1 (ATF-2/CREB-1) in primary human monocytes and macrophages” [4].

Pharmacological activity

The immunostimulant activity of the plant or its

preparations is caused by three mechanisms: Phagocytosis activation, fibroblast stimulation, and the enhancement of respiratory activity that results in augmentation of leukocyte mobility [5].

Dr. Robin Murphy in his Lotus Materia Medica narrates the drug picture of Both *Echinacea angustifolia* and *Echinacea purpura* which is as follows:

Table 2: Description of *Echinacea angustifolia* (Purple Cone – flower) [6] and *Echinacea purpura* (Black Sampson) [7]

	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i> (Purple Cone – flower) [6]	<i>Echinacea purpura</i> (Black Sampson) [7]
General description	Natural order: Composite Western species	Natural order: Composite Species found Eastern States of America
Parts used	Whole plant including roots	Whole plant including roots
Homoeopathic use	Tincture and all potencies	Tincture and all potencies
Clinical	Abscess, Aphae, Appendicitis, Auto-infection, Bites, Blood disorders, Blood poisoning, Erysipelas, Gangrene, Immune disorders, Lymphangitis, Meningitis, Poisoned, Wounds. Sore throat, Syphilis, Tonsillitis, Typhoid fever, Ulcers, Vaccinations effects, wounds.	In similar ailments indicated.
Dose	Since potency is not well proven, so primarily in tincture to stimulate the immune system. 5 – 40 drops as per the requirement of the cases	George Royal for the patient of furuncles, small boils, carbuncles with sanguine-purulent discharge, marked large sloughing, coming in crops on neck sometimes in perineum, 5 drops in first every three hours and apply hot solution of 1 part of tincture with 9 part of water.
Experiences	The Author of this article Dr. S. S. Moharana has cured the gangrenous ulcer of hand developed after a bite, when Ledum pal, Mercurius and Nitric acid failed to cure. Dose: <i>Echinacea ang.</i> 3 °C, 4 hourly, with local wash to wound by <i>Echinacea angustifolia</i> Q. Dr. S. S. Moharana cured only suppurated skin problems but could only able to palliate fistula, urethritis and senile vaginitis.	Dr. Royal used it successfully for suppurative appendicitis (after pus is formed and evacuated to intestine) when Mercurius and Hepar sulph. Failed to heal by the dose <i>Echinacea purpura</i> 1c five drops every night and morning for three weeks. Used in success, chronic attack of inflammation about the caecum, and in few cases of typhoid when tired feeling was ranking system.

Dr. William Boericke in his Book at *Echinacea* drug picture quotes “we are indebted to the eclectic school for this remarkable medicine as a corrector of blood dyscrasia” [8] One of the contribution of eclectic school to Homoeopathy is ‘*Echnacea angustifolia*’. *Echnacea angustifolia* in Homoeopathy generally used in mother tincture form administered both orally and as external application. Similarly some medicines used as external application as mother tincture and used as internal medication in its potency form. Master Hahnemann has used Thuja officinalis mother tincture in external application when some of obstinate wart did not responded to oral potency doses [9]. Then he advised to use Thuja officinalis mother tincture in that cases on warts. He also generalised the same principle in his 6th edition of Organon of medicine by advising us to use same mother tincture in skin that potentised medicine taken internally. In this category comprise *Callendula officinalis* and *Echnacea angustifolia*. There was lot of proving and clinical verification in *Calendula officinalis* mother tincture and has been proved in potency form but not in *Echinacea angustifolia*. Dr. William Boericke use it in his Materia Medica which is briefed as follows:

“Acute auto – infection. Symptoms of blood poisoning, septic conditions generally. Diarrhea in typhoid. Gonorrhoea. Boils. Erysipelas and foul ulcers. Gangrene. Tendency to malignancy in acute and sub-acute disorders. Last stage of cancer to ease pain. Venom infection. Cerebrospinal meningitis. Puerperal infection. Lymphatic inflammations, crushing injuries, snake bites and bites of sting generally. Foul discharge with emaciation and great debility [10].

Dr. Robin Murphy tells in his Lotus Materia Medica as follows:

“*Echinacea* is a blood and immune tonic. *Echinacea* has long been used by herbalist in typhoid conditions, diphtheria, malignant scarletina, carbuncles and boils. Also as a septic remedy in snake, animal and insect bites [11]”

It was the Master Kent who had been previously was a eclectic school of medicine physician first time used *Echinacea* in his repertory as 1st grade medicine in the rubric ‘Generalites, inflammation, external’ [12], and ‘Generalities, inflammation, internal’ [13].’

In Essential synthesis repertory, in the chapter Generals [14], in the rubric Inflammation, *Echinacea* is 4th grade medicine having value 1 whereas in subrubric Inflammation, gangrenous [15] *Echinacea* is 3rd grade medicine having value 2. In the rubric Inflammation, external and in the rubric Inflammation, internal [16] *Echinacea* is a 2nd grade medicine having value 3.

In third edition of Murphy’s repertory we also find in Clinical [17] chapter in the rubric Inflammation, external and Inflammation, internal *Echinacea* is the 2nd grade medicine having value 3.

All those stalwarts of Homoeopathy has described efficacy of *Echinacea angustifolia* in mother tinctures or low potency e.g. 1X potency. So here is an attempt to show the efficacy *Echinacea ultradilution* potencies.

Need of the study: Generally in homoeopathic treatment of suppurated wound, initially *Mercurius solubilis* is given when the discharge is serous. When serous discharge

converted to pus then *Silicea* is generally indicated. Since *Mercurius sol.* and *Silicea* are inimical to each other [18], *Silicea* cannot be given after *Mercurius solubilis*. In this case, Dr. Kent advise us to give a dose of *Hepar sulphuricum* after *Mercurius solubilis* [19]. Moreover, *Silicea* cannot be given to patient with history of tuberculosis because it opens up the healed tubercular lesion [20]. If *Callendulla officinalis* is used as potency and external application as mother tincture [21]. In the similar way I wanted to verify clinically the *Echinacea* potency efficacy as healer of the wound so that (1) It's mother tincture can be used as external application in wound while (2) *Echnacea* potency can be used internally for better efficacy. (3) *Echnacea angustifolia* can be used in infected wound due to insect and snake bite or any animal bite where the poison of insects and snakes can be neutralised along with controlling infection.

Hypothesis

1. *Calendulla officinalis* shows clinically the same action in its ultradilution potencies as it shows in mother tincture and lower dilutions in healing inflammations of infectious origin [22, 23].
2. *Mercurius solubilis* hydrargyrum also shows clinically the same action in its ultradilution potencies as it show in crude soluble form in healing inflammations of infectious origin [24].
3. *Argentum nitricum* shows clinically the same action in its dilution potencies as it shows in dilutions i.e. in its dilution 10 percent solution in healing inflammations of infectious origin of eyes [25].
4. So *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture and lower dilutions will show the same action in its ultradilution in healing inflammations of infectious and allergic origin.

Testing of Hypothesis

An extensive study *Echinacea* potencies was done in Charitable Ahinsa clinic Cuttack, Odisha where I was practicing from 1992 to 1999. It was the non controlled prospective study of *Echinacea* potency 3 °C for suppurative skin diseases. *Echinacea* 3 °C and in some cases 20 °C showed par excellence in healing the infected wound in over 100 cases.

Place of Study: Ahinsa clinic, Bhakrabad, Cuttack, Odisha state.

Time of Study: From 1992 to 1999

Type of Study: Clinical, non-controlled, prospective study

Sample size: 100

Ratio Analysis Result: 96 successfully cured. 4 cases failed to be cured permanently.

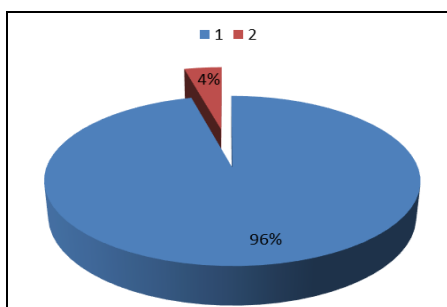


Fig 1: % of Success & Partial success 1: Successfully cured (96%). 2: Partially relieved (4%)

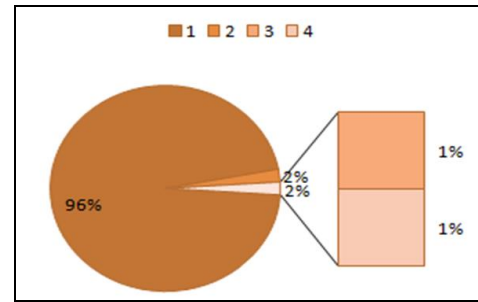


Fig 2: Partially relieved cases 2% fistula, 1% silent UTI, 1% senile vaginitis

Discussion

Out of 100 cases only 4 cases partially relieved that means when they were taking they are alright, after leaving medicines they were again suffering the same problem. Those cases were two fistula – in – ano, one silent urethritis without any pain, only urine flow bifurcated and the pus cells count could be more than 50 at that time, and the last case of my mother’s senile vaginitis. In fistula – in – ano, it is a surgical disease, the fistulous tract is to be removed, the urethritis case is silent indolent case of unknown origin for which constitutional medicine *Sepia* etc. as per indication should be given. My mother’s case was senile vaginitis and bacteria grow when vaginal acidity is reduced due to senile condition (vaginal stratified squamous epithelium is reduced due to lack of oestrogen in menopausal old lady as a result, vaginal acidity is reduced). So she had to take *Echinacea angustifolia* 30C lifelong.

In same Ahinsa clinic, later my student joined. He had more believe in alternative medication. In a case of scrotal abscess of a diabetic patient, he gave *Hepar sulphuricum* 20 °C at morning and *Echinacea angustifolia* 20 °C at evening. There was no response even after 7 days. Then the patient came to me and told the story. I just stopped *Hepar sulphuricum* 20 °C at morning and *Echinacea angustifolia* 20 °C was continued as usual i.e. Once daily. The abscess ripened after 2 days, and abscess discharged on 3rd day and totally healed in another seven days. Here *Hepar sulphuricum* 20 °C potency blocking the action of *Echinacea angustifolia* 20 °C potency. So monopharmacy is always advised.

Now some extraordinary miraculous case is to be discussed. In my clinic in Odisha a patient came with right hand enormously swollen, with oozing of pus, with no movement of the fingers. He had taken all the impatient homoeopathic treatment e.g., first *Ledum pal* 20 °C, followed by *Mercurius solubilis* 20 °C, followed by Nitric acid 100 °C in a time span of 10 days. When the whole hand became enormously swollen and painful with full of pus and ceased to work, he consulted modern medical treatment. They gave some antibiotics, when antibiotics failed to work, they advised amputation. For fear of amputation, he consulted me. I found all the indicated medicine was given but time gap was less for which serious aggravation has occurred. In this case, I used the Hahnemann’s formula e.g., *Echinacea angustifolia* 3 °C was given internally in four hours intervals and same *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture was used for cleaning the wound twice daily. After 7 days, the swelling and soreness of hand was reduced to 50% but no finger movements. Then *Echinacea angustifolia* 20 °C was prescribed to be taken daily once with dressing in *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture twice daily. In next seven days

there was only 10% swelling and ring finger and little finger started little movement. Then same *Echinacea angustifolia* 20 °C was repeated as before, in next week when he visited, there was much improvement of hand, no swelling and fingers were working.

Here is an another case, where *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture saved life from severe Homoeopathic aggravation. This is the case of a social scientist who had lot of believe in Homoeopathy and his whole family is treated with us. He had a big eczema in dorsum of leg for which Sepia 20 °C one dose only was prescribed as per indication by me at my clinic. He was slowly improving. After 15 days, Sepia 20 °C was repeated seeing no action (Generally I do not give two doses, O.D. method for the anticipation of aggravation. If the patient does not show any action or very slow action the second dose is repeated after 15 days. If no action found after 15 days also, the repetition is done by 50 millimal scale as per patient's susceptibility). After just one day of 2nd dose of Sepia, the scientist came with a big swollen leg with oozing of pus from eczematous site. He had fever of 102^o F. I gave him 20 drops of *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture four times a day in ½ cup of drinking water before food. In 7 days, fever, pain and swelling subsided. The eczema was totally cured in a month. Here the reader can ask me why I gave *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture for Homoeopathic aggravation. When the Homoeopathic aggravation is severe, it may also kill the patient or may severe the case. When there was Sepia overdose, aggravation is in active, it is better to give mother tincture whose active pharmaceutical ingredients can nullify the hypersensitive reaction, can kill the bacteria or fungi responsible for superadded infection, so to reduce inflammation at both the end, *Echinacea* mother tincture was used externally and internally. The potentized Sepia would continue to act without any interruption as *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture is not a potentized medicine. It is not also polypharmacy, but acute phase of severe aggravation is just subsided by mother tincture without intervening the constitutional remedy action. Then atopic eczema will be cured at its course. The atopic eczema was cured in a month totally, and did not appear again.

Conclusion

This clinical study shows *Echinacea angustifolia* has its action not only in mother tincture level but also in potency level. Thus indication of *Echinacea angustifolia* is derived as follows:

- Potency of *Echinacea* has equally potent action to that of mother tincture of *Echinacea angustifolia*. So only potency can be used in case of enteric fever or viral fever, sorethroat, viral meningitis, viral pneumonia, bronchitis, to ripen the abscess and healing it thereafter.
 - Those persons allergic to *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture they can take its potency form.
 - Echinacea* mother tincture should be used as internal medication and also for external application when there is homoeopathic or drug aggravation or disease aggravation while treating a suppurated or infected wound.
 - Mother tincture of *Echinacea angustifolia* should be used as external application while its potency can be used as internal medication while treating suppurated or infected wound of low susceptible cases e.g. in cancerous wound of old person or in cancer cachexia.
- In case of skin cancer or cancerous wound should be cleaned and dressed in *Echinacea* mother tincture and *Echinacea* potency can be taken internally if required while Thuja occidentalis or other deep active indicated medicine is used as intercurrent medicine.
 - In case of insect bite or non – poisonous snake bite, or animal bite internally the *Echinacea angustifolia* mother tincture can be taken because mother tincture contains many active pharmaceutical ingredients which can neutralise poison and externally can be applied.

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